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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5662
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 8293
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 7457
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2962
RUEHKF/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 9210
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 5051
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 3757
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 001034

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SUBJECT: ZARDARI DROPS FAHEEM AS PM CANDIDATE

REF: ISLAMABAD 900

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

11. (C) Summary. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Amin Faheem told Ambassador March 7 that Asif Zardari does not want him to be Prime Minister bec

12. (C) Faheem indicated that Zardari is leaning towards naming Ahmed Mukhtar as PM, a suggestion supported by reports from PPP rank and file.

Zardari Drops Faheem

13. (C) Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Vice Chairman Amin Faheem asked to see Ambassador in a one-on-one meeting March 7 to tell her that PPP C

14. (C) This last demand was too much for Faheem, who declined Zardari's offer and told Ambassador that he would resign from the party and go

15. (C) Noting that he had a good reputation with Punjabis as well as Sindhis, Faheem also said he had the support of Musharraf and could work

16. (C) While not asking for USG help directly, Faheem told Ambassador several times he wanted to "inform" her of the news. Ambassador responde

Leaning Towards Mukhtar

17. (C) Faheem indicated to Ambassador that Zardari was leaning towards selecting Ahmed Mukhtar as Prime Minister but that Shah Mehmood Quresh

Zardari Lectures the "Swatch" Crowd

18. (C) Faheem's news about Mukhtar tracks what we have been hearing at lower levels of the PPP. On March 6, Zardari postponed his expected ar

19. (C) Describing events March 6, PPP contacts said that Zardari lectured an overflowing crowd at Zardari house for two hours with lessons or

110. (C) Zardari's inner circle has been consistently dismissive of Faheem. Several in the PPP caucus, however, have named Faheem as their chc

Coalition Building

111. (C) The Election Commission is tallying final numbers with the addition of the apportioned women/minority seats. It appears that the PPP,

112. (C) Fazlur Rehman is bidding to work with the PPP on forming a provincial government in Balochistan and his six seats in the National Asse

113. (C) Faheem told Ambassador that Nawaz is softening his stance on the issue of restoring the judiciary, but Faheem appeared uniformed on t

PML Waits

114. (C) Meanwhile, Musharraf's PML party waits in case the coalition with Nawaz breaks down and Zardari turns to PML to form a coalition. Bel

115. (C) Comment: There are no sure winners among the four PPP contenders for PM, and we suspect Zardari just wants a placeholder until he him

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